



Labor & Economic Briefing

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Here is a summary of headlining accomplishments from the last 30 days:

Encouraging Economic & Urban Development

Michigan Remains #1 Vehicle Output Leader: According to the recently released 2003 Ward's Automotive Yearbook, Michigan is once again #1 in the nation for new vehicle production. According to the publication, Michigan workers produced 2,918,331 new cars and trucks in 2002, up from 2,687,547 in 2001. The Automotive Capitol of the World produced over one million vehicles more than #2 Ohio to earn this year's top ranking.

Three Companies to Expand or Relocate in Michigan Creating More Than 942 Jobs: Three companies plan to expand or relocate their business operations here in Michigan instead of at competing locations in other states. These projects are expected to create more than 942 new jobs for Michigan workers, nearly 800 of them directly related to manufacturing facility expansions. The three projects will provide a total of more than \$30 million in revenue to the state over the life of the Single Business Tax credits, resulting in a net positive gain for the state of more than \$23.5 million. The projects are expected to generate more than \$391 million in personal income during that time:



**Governor
Jennifer M.
Granholm**

■ **Fisher & Company** plans to build a world-class metal fabrication facility in Sterling Heights. The plant will be built in phases and will eventually accommodate more than 180,000 square feet of manufacturing space. It is estimated that the company's operations will generate a total of 379 jobs in the state by the year 2019, including up to 181 directly by the company. An MEDC incentive package, including a Single Business Tax credit valued at \$3.2 million over 13 years, helped Fisher & Company choose Michigan over a competing site in Tennessee.

■ **MS Truck Body Corp.**, a manufacturer of truck bodies and service parts, will relocate its parts business and is considering relocating one or more of its other business operations from Pennsylvania to an existing facility in Sturgis. The completed move is expected to create 420 new jobs for Michigan workers, including up to 264 directly by the company. A Single Business Tax credit worth more than \$1.1 million over a 5-year period is part of an incentive package that helped persuade the company to relocate and expand in Michigan.

■ Up to 143 new jobs, including 80 directly by the company, will be created when **USF Technology Services, Inc.** expands into Grand Rapids Township. The company is a wholly owned subsidiary of USF, providing information technology infrastructure for USF and its operating companies. The new facility in Grand Rapids Township will serve as a centralized information technology center consolidating operations that are currently located in nine states. USF Technology Services was offered an incentive package, including a Single Business Tax credit valued at more than \$2.1 million over 10 years, to expand in Michigan.

Ironwood Plastics Expansion to Result in 146 New Jobs to be Created in Houghton County Airpark: Governor Jennifer M. Granholm joined Houghton County and Ironwood Plastics officials in Ironwood to present a ceremonial check for \$35,000 to support the company's expansion. The company plans to build a new facility in the Houghton County Airpark Renaissance Zone in Franklin Township, resulting in a total of 146 new jobs and \$9 million in private investment. Ironwood Plastics had considered locating the new production facility at a competing site in Two Rivers, Wisconsin. The \$35,000 Community Development Block Grant is part of an incentive package offered through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation to convince the company to expand in Michigan. The funding will be used to make road improvements needed to accommodate construction of the new facility. The MEDC also offered Ironwood Plastics a Single Business Tax credit valued at more than \$600,000 over a 13-year period. A family-owned and operated company; Ironwood Plastics produces custom injection molded products serving a diverse set of customers, chiefly in the automotive, electrical connector and defense industries.

Governor Announces Major Redevelopment Project Revitalization in Alpena to Create 160 Jobs and Spur Up to \$40 Million Investment: Governor Jennifer M. Granholm joined city officials in Alpena to present a ceremonial check for \$1.6 million to the city for a major downtown development project expected to create 163 new jobs and spur \$12 million in private investment. The reconstruction project proposed by Alpena Marc, LLC, will consist of a mixed-use development including retail space, hotel/conference center, brewery, pub, residential condominiums, museum, and a marine sanctuary. The grant will help the city make infrastructure improvements necessary for the renovation of the old Fletcher Paper Mill buildings. The improvements include expansion of existing water and sewer lines as well as streetscaping and road reconstruction along Fletcher Street in Alpena. The entire project will cover about 29 acres with nearly 3,000 linear feet of riverfront. A 40-foot boardwalk will extend along the Thunder Bay River to Water Tower Park. The older mill buildings will be restored and new construction will mirror the architectural style of the existing buildings to maintain historical continuity. It is expected that the initial private investment will exceed \$12 million over the first five years of the project and reach a total of \$40 million at the project's completion in 2010.

New Focus on Manufacturing: Governor Granholm used her August 6 speech at the annual Center for Automotive Research Management Briefing Seminars to address the decline in manufacturing jobs in Michigan and the United States. The message got the attention of the more than 1,300 automotive executives and industry experts at the annual conference, most of whom have firsthand experience with the challenges faced by manufacturing today. The U.S. manufacturing industry lost more than 2 million jobs in 2001-2002 alone, with Michigan losing 100,000 in the same two-year period. The governor announced a specific plan of action, in which she will:

- gather Michigan's manufacturing industry leaders within the next several months to explore issues and solutions in a state-level meeting;
- encourage the governors of the nation's other top manufacturing states to hold similar meetings in their states; and encourage those governors to join her in Washington, D.C. to discuss state and federal actions needed to sustain the nation's manufacturing industry.

Governor Presents Funding for New Biosciences Center: Governor Granholm joined legislative leaders in Kalamazoo on August 5 to present a \$10 million check for a new Biosciences Research and Commercialization Center. The center is both a significant addition to Michigan's Life Sciences Corridor initiative and another component of the governor's strategy to help keep former Pfizer scientists, researchers and information technology professionals in Michigan. Located in the Western Michigan University Business Technology and Research Park, the center will significantly enhance Michigan's ability to move life sciences discoveries from the laboratory to the marketplace.



Main Street Workshops Announced: The MEDC has announced that it will conduct five workshops around the state in September to help guide local officials through the application process for the popular Main Street downtown redevelopment program. The program provides intensive, year-round training in strategies to attract private investment and new jobs to local downtowns. The competition for the next round of Main Street designations begins this fall. Workshops will be held in Portland, Marshall, Howell, Boyne City and Calumet.

Pfizer Formation Fund Success: The Pfizer Formation Fund has scored an immediate success. Pfizer announced that it has awarded a three-year, \$18 million contract to Jasper Clinical Research and Development just one week after the company received \$175,000 in Life Sciences Corridor funding. Jasper was founded by three former Pharmacia researchers. Under the contract with Pfizer, the company will provide early-phase clinical studies of drug candidates and drug development consultation services.

Governor to Review Land Use Council Report: Governor Jennifer M. Granholm instructed CIS Director David Hollister to lead her administration's review of the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council report released recently. Director Hollister will consider the Council's vision and goals statement in suggesting new policies at the state level. Governor Granholm created the bipartisan council by executive order in February. The council was charged by the Governor and legislative leaders with studying the causes, effects, and trends of urban sprawl in Michigan and devising proposals to curb its impact on commerce and the environment. The Council was co-chaired by former Governor William Milliken and former Attorney General Frank J. Kelley.

MEDC Co-Sponsoring Women-Owned Business Workshops on Growing Successful Businesses: The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) is co-sponsoring four half-day workshops around the state designed to help women achieve business success. The Women's Economic Development Outreach (WEDO) will co-sponsor the sessions. The workshops will run from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon, followed by informal networking and optional roundtable discussions with panelists and speakers. The workshops are designed to present an overview of the resources available to women entrepreneurs through federal, state and local government programs, as well as the private sector. Participants will hear presentations by experts on business financing, certification, contracting, management, mentoring and goal setting. Future WEDO Workshops are scheduled September 10 in Ann Arbor and September 12 in Kalamazoo. For further information about WEDO, call (888) 622-4249.

Michigan's Life Sciences Industry Growing Rapidly: The Michigan Economic Development Corporation released a new strategic study today that shows the Michigan's Life Sciences Corridor is growing rapidly in recent years in terms of employment, sales and new companies. Michigan is number one in the nation for the addition of new life sciences companies between 1999 and 2002, according to the study. This success of the Michigan Life Sciences Corridor is a key reason for expanding the initiative to help encourage similar growth in the homeland security and advanced automotive industries. The new Technology Tri-Corridor will allow the state to build on its life sciences success, while nurturing the two additions to the corridor. According to the study, Michigan's life sciences industry boasts 31,777 employees, 542 companies and \$4.8 billion in annual sales in 2002. These figures represent increases of 27 percent, 32 percent and 165 percent, respectively, over 1999. As a result, Michigan's life sciences industry exceeded the overall growth rate of the United States life sciences industry over the three-year period.

Gov. Granholm Dedicates First Michigan Tech Enterprise SmartZone Incubator -"The Powerhouse": Governor Jennifer M. Granholm joined Michigan Tech Enterprise SmartZone officials in Houghton to dedicate the new Powerhouse business incubator, the first of three planned for the SmartZone. The Powerhouse will help to ensure that cutting edge research developed at Michigan Tech and Finlandia universities has a place to take root and grow in the western Upper Peninsula. The Michigan Tech Enterprise SmartZone is a collaborative effort between the cities of Houghton and Hancock in partnership with Michigan Technological University with assistance from Finlandia University, a private university with strong ties to Finland. The Michigan Tech Enterprise SmartZone hopes to create 550 new high-tech jobs over the next 15 years. In April 2001, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) designated 11 SmartZones in communities throughout Michigan. The zones are designed to bring business, research activities, and training and support services together in one location allowing for easy collaboration and to accelerate the commercialization of new technologies. Since their inception, Michigan's SmartZones have attracted 37 new companies and spurred more than \$120 million in private investment.

Granholm Announces Additional \$200,000 to Spur Life Sciences Company Formation: An additional \$200,000 is being provided from the Michigan Life Sciences Corridor fund to help former Pfizer and Pharmacia workers start up new life sciences companies. The funding will be awarded to the Southwest Michigan Innovation Center and will be used to provide assistance in business plan development, management support, market assessment, market research, technical assessments and other services. The Southwest Michigan Innovation Center (SMIC) is a state-of-the-art facility designed to nurture and develop start-up firms in both early and later stages. Located in the Kalamazoo SmartZone, the Southwest Michigan Innovation Center serves as one of Michigan's business accelerators designed to help entrepreneurs and researchers identify technology with commercial potential and, with the assistance of SmartZone resources, help develop the technology into viable businesses. The \$200,000 in funding is in addition to the \$2 million company creation fund recently provided by the Michigan Life Sciences Corridor to help recently laid-off Pfizer scientists and professionals begin new business ventures. Keeping these highly educated workers in Michigan has been a priority for Governor Granholm since Pfizer's acquisition of Pharmacia resulted in the loss of key research positions in several Michigan locations.

Boosting Michigan's Tourism Industry

Travel Michigan Shifts Gears to Autumn: While not throwing in the beach towel on summer just yet, Travel Michigan's new promotions for encouraging travel to and within the state are looking ahead to fall colors and romantic getaways. Billboards appearing now encourage "Fall Getaways for Two" and for people to check out Travel Michigan's Web site at <http://www.michigan.org> for weekly fall color updates. Advertisements with the "fall getaways for two" theme will also begin appearing in out-of-state publications in September.



Protecting Consumers

PSC to Host Consumer Forums Across State: The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) announced that it will host a series of consumer forums around Michigan in September and October. Each forum will include the latest information on electric and natural gas rates for the winter, the investigation into the recent blackout, opportunities customers have to select an alternative electric or natural gas provider, the status of local and long distance telephone service and the national "Do Not Call" list. Following is information on each upcoming consumer forum:

- Sault Ste. Marie- Tuesday, Sept. 9, 6 p.m., City-County Building Commission Room (2nd Floor) 325 Court St.
- Lansing- Monday, Sept. 15, 6 p.m., Letts Community Center - Gym, 1220 West Kalamazoo
- Grayling- Thursday, Sept. 18, 6 p.m., City Hall - Council Chambers, 1020 City Blvd.
- Bloomfield Township- Tuesday, Sept. 23, 6 p.m., Lahser High School Auditorium
3456 Lahser Rd.
- Ecorse- Thursday, Sept. 25, 6 p.m., City Hall - Council Chambers, 3869 West Jefferson Ave.
- Kalamazoo- Tuesday, Sept. 30, 6 p.m., City Hall - Commission Chambers, 241 West South St.
- Detroit- Thursday, Oct. 2, 6 p.m., Northwest Activities Center - Ballroom, 18100 Meyers Rd.

MPSC Chair Addresses Michigan Electric and Gas Association, Highlights State Investigation into August 14 Blackout:

Michigan Public Service Commission Chair J. Peter Lark addressed members of the Michigan Electric and Gas Association at its annual fall conference, highlighting the MPSC's investigation into the August 14 blackout that affected large portions of Michigan and resulted in over six million people losing power. Lark noted that with multiple investigations under way, it is still too early to pinpoint any causes. However, he did cite potential contributing factors, including: the failure of utilities and transmission operators to communicate any warnings to Michigan utilities and a lack of enforceable standards for the reliable operation of the transmission system. Lark also emphasized that voluntary reliability rules with no enforceable oversight are not acceptable and that a truncated regional wholesale market for electricity does not work. To prevent future blackouts, Lark called for the creation of mandatory reliability rules throughout the industry within the "footprint" of the North American Electric Reliability Council (NERC). These rules must include the ability to impose sanctions on market participants that violate rules, he said. NERC should be charged with developing the rules, while the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) should have the oversight of the rules. In addition, coordination of the grid should be administered through an independent and strong Regional Transmission Organization (RTO). "The security and reliability of the interstate electric transmission system must be under the purview of the federal government," Lark concluded, noting FERC's frustration that there is no federal regulatory authority over reliability. "This deficiency must be eradicated by passing legislation that requires enforceable standards for the safe and reliable operation of the nation's power grid."

Protecting Worker Safety

Governor Announces \$1 Million for Worker Safety and Health Grants: CIS has awarded 19 Consultation Education and Training (CET) Grants totaling \$1 million to promote workplace safety and health. A significant number of these grants will provide construction safety training. Although only about four percent of Michigan's workforce is employed in construction, 40 percent of work-related fatalities occur in this industry and is one of the most hazardous industries in Michigan. This year a CET grantee will provide bilingual safety and health training to Spanish-speaking workers. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the deaths of Hispanic workers increased by 53 percent from 1992 to 2000, while the rate for every other group (whites, Native Americans, African Americans and Asians) decreased by as much as 10 percent. Other grants include: workplace violence prevention, fleet safety, Rapid Intervention Team training for firefighters, logging safety, safety and health training for new workers, and safe work practices for agricultural workers. The grant recipients are: **Alpena Community College, Associated General Contractors, Bay de Noc Community College, Center for Workplace Violence Prevention, Great Lakes Fabricators, Lansing Area Safety Council, Michigan Chiropractic Council, Michigan Farm Bureau, Michigan Road Builders Association, Michigan State AFL-CIO, Michigan State University/Labor Program Service, North Central Michigan College, PASSES, SEMCOSH (Southeast Michigan Coalition on Occupational Safety and Health), Traffic Safety Association, United Auto Workers (UAW), University of Michigan, Wayne State University and Bay de Noc Community College (Research Project).**

Matching Employers & Workers via the Internet

More Than 30,000 Resumes Added to Talent Bank: The Michigan Talent Bank posted 32,044 new resumes bringing the total searchable resumes to 610,819, an 11 percent increase over the previous month. There was an 11 percent increase in new business registrations with nearly 1,000 added. More than 6,000 job orders were posted bringing the total job orders posted to 17,489.

Michigan Career Portal Draws More Than 50,000 Visitors: A total of 52,992 unique visitors came to Michigan's new online Career Portal in the last month (<http://www.michigan.gov/careers>). The Job Seekers page was visited most frequently with 13,278 unique visitors. The Employers page posted an increase of 212 unique visitors, while Online Resources indicated increased usage by nearly 300.

Assisting Jobless Workers

Governor Granholm's \$206 million plan for helping long-term unemployed approved by Legislature: Some 53,000 long-term unemployed Michigan workers will be eligible for \$206 million in additional jobless benefits through a plan proposed by Gov. Granholm and overwhelmingly approved by the state legislature. The plan allows for the payment of up to 13 weeks of additional federal Temporary Extended Unemployment Compensation (TEUC-X) and some federal-state Extended Benefits (EB). Workers will qualify for TEUC-X if they exhausted their TEUC benefits after the week ending May 24, 2003. The first week for which TEUC-X can be paid is the week ending August 23. BWUC has already mailed applications to those who may be potentially eligible. The Governor's plan does not charge Michigan employers, and in fact, it will generate about \$9.8 million in new general revenues for the state through income taxes and sales taxes. These changes to Michigan's unemployment insurance (UI) law will sunset on December 27, 2003.

State Options for Health Coverage Tax Credit Take Effect August 1: The Bureau of Workers' & Unemployment Compensation's Unemployment Insurance program has completed the process for ongoing identification of those jobless Michigan workers who qualify for the new federal Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC). The tax credit helps pay the health insurance premiums of workers who are receiving federal Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA) or a pension through the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC). As many as 15,000 TRA and PBGC recipients in Michigan could qualify for the tax credit. HCTC can be used to purchase qualified health coverage, including two optional plans developed by Blue Cross/Blue Shield in cooperation with the state. With these plans, workers can claim a 65% tax credit in advance and pay the remaining 35% with monthly payments, instead of claiming the total credit annually on their taxes. At Gov. Granholm's request the UI program has worked with the Office of the Insurance Commissioner and the Department of Career Development to identify those who are HCTC eligible, to market the tax credit and to help develop the state-optional plans offered by Blue Cross/Blue Shield.

250 New Jobs Made Available to Benton Harbor Youth: Through collaboration between state departments, Michigan created 250 new summer job opportunities for youth in Benton Harbor. The jobs were targeted at youth ages 14 to 21 - the segment of the Benton Harbor community with the highest unemployment rate. The jobs were supported through existing funds from the Departments of Career Development and Transportation (MDOT). Fifty jobs were in MDOT's Youth Corps program and offered local youth the opportunity to work alongside MDOT cleanup crews and "job shadow" MDOT employees. A total of \$499,000 in existing youth job development funds will be directed to the program. The jobs were administered by Benton Harbor Youth Works, a local collaborative initiative which brings various community organizations together to focus on youth employment. Michigan Works! is a Benton Harbor Youth Works partner.

Making Homeownership More Affordable

Michigan IDA Partnership's Efforts to Make Dream of Homeownership More Achievable: In an effort to make the dream of homeownership more achievable, the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) will fund three regional coordinating organizations (RCO) of the Michigan Individual Development Accounts Partnership (MIDAP). The three RCOs, City Vision, Inc of Grand Rapids, Community Action Agency of Jackson, and Oakland Livingston Human Services Agency of Pontiac, have agreed to match MSHDA's contribution of \$200,000 each for use towards matching participant housing investments up to \$1,000 by \$3 for every dollar saved by the participant. Individual Development Accounts are matched savings accounts designed to help low-income and low-asset families accumulate a few thousand dollars for high-return investments such as homeownership, education and business ownership. Past participants have been overwhelmingly pleased with the services. One participant said, "It jump-starts your goals. If you can get serious about saving your money it motivates you and speeds it up."

Four New Homes to be Built in Benton Harbor Thanks to MSHDA Grant:

Four new-construction, single-family homes will be built on vacant lots in Benton Harbor thanks to a \$250,000 grant from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA). All of the homes will be built in the vicinity of Pavone and Empire streets in Benton Harbor by the local nonprofit Cornerstone Alliance. Dislocated families will be given first priority to purchase the homes. Assisting the potential homebuyers with homeownership counseling and information on securing a mortgage will be Home Ownership Made Easier (HOME) of Benton Harbor. The local Youth Build Program will assist in this effort so local residents can learn housing construction skills - with workers assisting local sub-contractors as part of this project. Not only will the construction project add value to this community, the end result will be new homes for some very fortunate families. The families who were displaced by civil unrest earlier this summer will have a priority opportunity to qualify for purchasing the new homes. They will be selected through a systematic process that includes counseling and training to help them become eligible for the MSHDA funding. Construction for the new homes should be underway by early October.



Governor Granholm and Lisa Lehman from MSHDA's Office of Community Development help break ground for future homes in Benton Harbor on Aug. 26.

Providing More Efficient Services to Better Serve Customers

Rule Change to Eliminate Annual Renewals of Deviations from Youth Work Hours: A change to the state's Youth Employment Standards has eliminated the annual renewal of deviations in the working hours of 16 and 17-year-old minors. With the change, which became effective in late July, approved deviations in working hours will remain in effect until the minor meets one of the requirements to be exempted (the minor turns 18, completes the requirements for graduation, as a 17-year-old passes the GED test or becomes emancipated) or until the department modifies, denies or revokes the deviation. There are two types of deviations in working hours for minors - general and individual. Employers can seek a general deviation, when they want 16 and 17-year-old minors to work more than the law now allows. Only 16 and 17-year-olds can apply for the individual deviation, which permits the minor to work beyond the one hour the general deviation allows. Minors who are 14 or 15 years old cannot work deviated hours. The Bureau of Workers' & Unemployment Compensation handles about 4,700 requests a year for deviations.

State of Michigan Adds Online Service for Health Professionals to Check Status of License Applications: A new online service which allows health professionals to check on the status of their license application. The Health Licensing Application Status Lookup is available at <http://www.michigan.gov/cis> and clicking on "Family & Health Services" to get to online services (direct link <http://www2.cis.state.mi.us:7778/appstatus/>). This new service is available for applications for Chiropractic, Dentistry, Emergency Medical Services, Marriage and Family Therapy, Medicine, Nursing, Nursing Home Administrator, Optometry, Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery, Pharmacy, Physical Therapy, Physician's Assistants, Podiatric Medicine and Surgery, Counseling, Psychology, Occupational Therapists, Sanitarians, Social Work, and Veterinary Medicine licenses. The feature will alleviate applicant's concerns about their license application and help reduce calls to the Bureau of Health Services which receives numerous inquiries every day from applicants who are anxious to receive their license and get to work on their new careers. Health professionals will need a customer number to access the confidential license application status information. The customer number is provided in a letter upon receipt of the application to the CIS Bureau of Health Services.

CIS Recognized with Accela Trendsetter Award for its Innovative E-Government Solutions: Accela, Inc. announced that the Michigan Department of Consumer & Industry Services Bureau of Construction Codes and Fire Safety has been selected as the recipient of the Company's 2003 Trendsetter Award in recognition of the State of Michigan's success in implementing effective e-government initiatives. The Michigan Department of Consumer and Industry Services, Bureau of Construction Codes and Fire Safety (BCCFS) recently implemented a public access portal powered by Accela's VelocityHall®. The site, found at <http://www.michigan.gov/bccpermits>, provides Michigan contractors with on-line access to electrical, mechanical, and plumbing permits. Using the site, licensed contractors can obtain new permits on-line in a matter of minutes. The previous process required contractors to mail in applications, resulting in a waiting period up to fifteen working days to receive the processed permit. The Bureau's new service not only eliminates mailing time, but the system instantly detects errors such as incomplete forms, invalid addresses, and other potential inaccuracies. In addition, the system is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week so contractors can check the status of a permit at any time, saving time and overhead costs for both the contractors and the agency. Michigan contractors are extremely pleased with the new system. "This new service is a very useful tool that saves me an immense amount of logistical downtime resulting from previously going back and forth between my office, the State of Michigan, and the job site," states Kevin Krula, owner of KTM Heating & Cooling. "I am now able to instantly receive a permit number and proceed with business. What was normally a two week turnaround time for the inspection process, now only takes one to three days." The portal was commercially launched 120 days ago and already accounts for nearly 20% of the agency's permit transactions.

Providing Career Development Resources

Workforce Transition Section (WTS) Assists Employers and Displaced Workers: The Workforce Transition Section (WTS) responded to 23 notices of planned plant closures or mass layoffs in the last month. Contact was made with employers and union representatives in response to receipt of a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) notice, letter, phone call, newspaper article, or other means of notification. A brief overview of available dislocated worker services was given, and depending on the number of jobs impacted, a formal on-site Rapid Response Team Meeting was scheduled or arrangements were made for the local Michigan Works! Agency to meet with the affected employees to provide information on available services. Other services provided:

- Conducted 11 Rapid Response Meetings with employers (and union representatives, where employees are represented by a collective bargaining agreement).
- Reviewed 12 new Trade petitions filed with the WTS.
- Conducted nine information meetings in various areas of the state for workers certified under the Trade Act. There were nine new Trade certifications this period.
- Attended seven worker orientation sessions and three Joint Adjustment Committee meetings, responded to 295 phone calls and 87 e-mails from individuals, company/union representatives, and service providers who requested information or clarification of issues related to the WARN Act, dislocated worker services, and the Trade Act.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) Assists Michiganians with Disabilities: Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) helped 548 individuals find jobs during July. During the same month, 963 Michiganians with disabilities preparing to become employed were provided with job-related services, such as training and assistive technology. In July, 193 Michigan businesses were provided with services that included referral of qualified workers, reasonable accommodation recommendations, and ergonomic assessments.

Employment Service Agency Sponsors Fidelity Bonding Programs for Employers With High Risk Employees: Fidelity Bonding Programs presentations were made to 120 Department of Corrections staffers. The Fidelity Bonding Program is sponsored by the Michigan Department of Career Development, Employment Service Agency. It is a business insurance policy of the Travelers Property Casualty Insurance Company that insures an employer against employee theft, forgery, larceny, or embezzlement. Only the MDCD-ESA's Fidelity Bonding Program will issue Fidelity Bonds to employers to cover anyone who is not usually bondable, thereby eliminating this significant barrier to employment. It's an incentive for employers to hire job seekers who are qualified, but who are also considered high-risk because of some factor in their personal backgrounds. Employers can obtain workers without taking a risk, and high-risk job seekers can find work. Any Michigan Works! service center is eligible to deliver bonding services. The bond is free-of-charge to the employer who determines the amount of the bond based on job liability, ranging from \$5,000 to \$25,000 with no deductible amount.

Michigan Agricultural Labor Plan Submitted to Be Submitted to USDOL: Michigan's Agricultural Labor Plan, which outlines how the state will serve the Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers who work in the agricultural industry during Program Year 2003 (July 1, 2003 - June 30, 2004), has been distributed to public agencies and advocacy groups for comment. This plan will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Labor once the comments have been incorporated into the plan.

Career Development Helps Provides Students with Automotive Training: The Office of Career and Technical Preparation (OCTP) continues to partner with the Automotive Youth Educational System (AYES) to teach students the skills necessary to service the highly sophisticated and technical machinery found in current automobiles. Working with the Michigan Automobile Dealers Association and the Detroit Automobile Dealers association, AYES is developing outstanding automotive school-to-career programs at the high school level. These programs have recently become registered apprenticeship programs with the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training. The goal of the program is to enhance the image of the automotive service field as well as the dealership work environment. A very successful AYES conference was held recently at the Detroit Renaissance Center for high school teachers who are participating in AYES.

Preparing Students with Disabilities for Adult Life Roles: The Office of Career and Technical Preparation recently participated in the annual conference for the Transition Services Project. This is a comprehensive, collaborative effort of school personnel, families, and agencies to improve outcomes of students with disabilities transitioning from school to adult life roles. It is also a partnership among state- level offices of Special Education, Michigan Rehabilitation Services, and Career and Technical Preparation.

Office of Adult Education Awards Grants: The Adult Education program awarded \$1,105,595 for English Literacy civics grants for the 2003-2004 program year and \$15,359,743 for combined general instruction and institutional federal grants.

Office of Adult Education Works on Learning Disability Conference: The Adult Education Office continued collaborating with The Learning Disabilities Association (LDA) for the LDA conference scheduled for October 26-28 at the Kellogg Center in East Lansing. There will be a pre-symposium with the focus on assistive technology for adults with learning disabilities to assist them with job-related issues, including dealing with co-workers, disclosure, and accommodations.

Career Development Helps Train Community College Faculty in Latest Information Technology: The Office of Postsecondary Education Community College Services Unit has been actively involved in the Michigan Working Connections IT Faculty Development Institute. Henry Ford Community College has been designated as the Michigan Regional Coordinator, and has received a consortium grant from the Office of Postsecondary Services to help support this endeavor. Other sponsors for 2003 include Microsoft, McGraw Hill, Thomson Course Technology, and Prentice Hall, with Henry Ford Community College being one of only 15 community colleges nationwide that were awarded this grant. The objectives of the Working Connections IT Faculty Development Institute were to train community college faculty in the latest emerging information technologies, and provide regional IT faculty with best practices in IT pedagogy. This week-long training (August 4-8) had 119 faculty participants. It provided an opportunity for all individuals to partake in discussions with key IT industry managers as well as networking with other regional faculty. This event should assist IT faculty in the development of their skills, allowing them to produce curriculum.